

# Tynan Sylvester

tynan.sylvester@gmail.com

www.tynansylvester.com

617.905.7198

I am an experienced systems and level designer who finds beauty in elegant solutions to complex design problems. Years of self-started projects have given me a very broad skillset, so I'm good at finding opportunities on the borders between disciplines and moving around to fill gaps on a team. I'm fiercely motivated to do great work, and I place great value on human relationships. I write regularly about game design and play games across many genres.

## WORK EXPERIENCE

### **Irrational Games**

*Systems Designer*

*Oct 2010 - Present*

- On *BioShock Infinite*, I combine my level and systems design skills to rapidly explore and implement new combinations of player tools, AIs, level layouts and combat scripts.
- I work with level designers to help them best use our combat systems.
- I use our custom AI technology to build behavior trees that drive our AI characters.
- I prototype, design, and tune weapons and vigors.
- One of my combat designs was chosen by the director to represent our game at a key presentation on stage in front of 2000 sales reps.
- I write and maintain feature specs for use by programmers, artists, and testers.

*Level Designer*

*May 2008 - Oct 2010*

- Wrote, pitched, prototyped, built, and iterated on levels for *BioShock Infinite* as half of a fixed designer/artist pair.
- Took feedback from design, art, and tech directors, combining it with ideas drawn from partner brainstorming and research.
- Arranged and oversaw quick but realistic playtests to feed empirical data into our iterative process.
- Designed a level for the *BioShock* PS3 DLC together with an artist.

### **Groove Games & Epic Games**

*Contract Level Designer*

*2006-2007*

- Did offsite level design on *Close Quarters Conflict*, *Warpath*, and *Unreal Tournament 2004*. Some contracts involved creating a new level to spec and iterating on it several times in response to feedback. Others were polish on earlier amateur work that was being picked up for release as part of an official level pack.
- Was re-hired several times.

### **Canadian Forces Reserve**

*Private*

*2005*

- Was in the 712<sup>th</sup> Signals Squadron in Montreal and completed basic training at the Canadian Forces base in Shilo, Manitoba. I learned drill, weapons handling, trench construction, land navigation, radio comms, how to make a bed very accurately.

## EDUCATION

### Concordia University (Montreal)

*B.Sc. Computer Science*

*Class of 2008*

---

- Won the Dean's List award (top 5% of students) for all four academic years. I spent one semester on exchange at the City University of Hong Kong. I also earned a minor in Computation Arts.

## PROFICIENCIES

- Unreal level editing and Kismet scripting (expert)
- 3dsmax/Maya modeling and animation (moderate)
- Photoshop/Illustrator (moderate)
- C++ and UnrealScript (moderate)
- Sound Forge (moderate)
- Word, Excel, Powerpoint, and all other standard productivity software

## PERSONAL WORK

### *Articles published*

---

- I have had three feature articles published on Gamasutra: *Compulsion Engineers* (2008), *Decision-Based Gameplay Design* (2005), and *Style and Substance in Game Design* (2005)

### *Design contests won*

---

- 1st place winner, Assault Level category of the Make Something Unreal contest, 2005. Prize was \$3,000.
- 1st place winner, Fragapalooza Level Design Contest, 2002. Contest was judged by the Digital Extremes design team. Prize was 3dsmax.

### *Levels, mods and games*

---

- Founded and led the team that made *Elemental Conflict*, a total conversion mod for UT2003. We released two fully functional versions over 14 months. I did code, audio, art, and design, organized other team members, maintained a Web presence, and arranged playtests.
- Founding member of all three Community Bonus Packs. Downloaded over 100K times each, they were the biggest level packs for *Unreal Tournament 2004*.
- Designed and programmed *The Player League*, and indie strategy game about chasing girls in nightclubs. After I got a job I ended the project unfinished after 5 months of work (and some spectacular design failures).
- Designed levels for *Tactical Ops*, the most popular mod for *Unreal Tournament*.

## INTERESTS

I enjoy playing piano and guitar, writing about game design, thinking about epistemology, cooking egg and potato dishes, practicing martial arts, reading nonfiction and, of course, playing games of all kinds. My favorite nonfiction and fiction book are *Thinking, Fast and Slow* and *1984*, respectively.